

Contact:

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Latest weather service reports indicate record flooding possible

Washington, D.C. - Minnesota's entire Congressional delegation sent a bipartisan letter to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator Craig Fugate urging the agency to plan, prepare, and coordinate flood protection efforts in advance of the spring flooding. The delegation pushed FEMA to take immediate steps to facilitate a timely response to any damage once the water recedes. The National Weather Service recently forecast that regions across Minnesota face the strong possibility of major flood events and that the Red River Valley region is again facing the possibility of record floods.

"As Minnesota prepares for potential for devastating flooding across much of the state this spring, we ask for your immediate assistance to plan, prepare, and coordinate flood protection efforts to facilitate FEMA's timely response to any damage once the water recedes," wrote members in the letter.

The letter highlighted the major flooding that occurred last year, which led President Obama to declare 31 counties in Minnesota as disaster areas.

The full text of the letter is below:

March 15, 2011

The Honorable Craig Fugate
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Fugate:

As Minnesota prepares for the potential for devastating flooding across much of the state this spring, we ask for your immediate assistance to plan, prepare, and coordinate flood protection efforts to facilitate FEMA's timely response to any damage once the water recedes.

Last year, above average rainfall, an untimely melting of snow, and a steady stream of severe weather resulted in the Red River, the Minnesota River, and the Mississippi River reaching major flood stage and devastating communities across Minnesota. As a result, President Obama declared 31 counties in Minnesota as disaster areas resulting from the spring 2010 floods. Communities across these river valleys launched an unprecedented effort to protect homes, businesses and schools from record flooding. Residents acted heroically to protect not only their own homes, but the homes of their neighbors and community landmarks.

Unfortunately, the National Weather Service's most recent outlook for spring shows that regions across Minnesota are again facing the strong possibility of major flood events. Specifically, there is a 50 percent chance that the Red River of the North in Moorhead-Fargo will rise to 38.8 feet, and a 20 percent chance the River will rise to 41.9 feet, which is over one foot higher than the 2009 historical event. Further north, East Grand Forks-Grand Forks has a 50 percent chance that the Red River will rise to 50.4 feet, which is five feet higher than last year. Along the Mississippi River, the latest projects show at least a 50 percent likelihood that the water will rise significantly above last year's level in Aitkin, St. Cloud, and St. Paul. Communities along the Minnesota River are also preparing for rising water with a 50 percent chance that the water reaches nearly the same levels as last year near New Ulm, Mankato and Jordan. These same communities devastated by last year's flooding are now preparing for yet another flood event.

Thank for your consideration of our request. These communities need and deserve the attention of our federal agencies.

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